



[Bartolomé de las Casas, 1484 - 1566](#)

Liberation Theology

In the last third of the 20th Century a phenomenon arose that recalled Marx's "Introduction to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right", where Marx said:

"...the criticism of religion is the prerequisite of all criticism."

And:

"The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo."

In other words, the criticism of religion was only a starting-point, and not the main business. The main business is the

restoration of humanity to itself, not so much from out of the clutches of the religious clerics, but more so from the under the boot of the bourgeoisie. The struggle begins, not against religion, but within religion.

And so it came to pass that in the 1960s there arose, within and among the ranks of the religious, a movement which had the same essential aims that Marx had. This was Liberation Theology. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church in particular recognised it for what it was, and suppressed it. The hierarchy of the Protestant denominations saw it for what it was, and co-opted and neutered its remnants, revising Liberation Theology's "base community" idea into the sectarian "basic Christian community", and thereby reversing the liberation that Liberation Theology had brought.

But in the mean time, Liberation Theology had a life, and it left a legacy.

Father Joe Falkiner used sometimes to attend the Communist University. The main attached/linked item today begins with an article of Father Joe's from 2006 on Liberation Theology and Scripture, and continues with a short history of Liberation Theology from two more of its well-known practitioners, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff.

Father Joe quickly mentions that Liberation Theology "*often used the educational methods of Paulo Friere*", and that they used original scriptural texts, just as the Communist University uses mainly original texts, and preferably not second-hand

commentary or analysis. Father Joe writes: “... *the theology was done jointly by these people in the shantytowns and their priests, not solely by traditional theologians based in seminaries and universities.*”

This is what we as the CU do with politics, as well as religion, using Paulo Freire’s methods.

We do not have a good picture of Father Joe Falkiner. Instead, the picture above is of [Bartolomé de las Casas](#), a member of the same order (the Order of Preachers, a.k.a. Dominicans) as Father Joe.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Liberation Theology, 2006, Falkiner, L and C Boff](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).